

Setback to comeback

Sulser aims for big state meet despite injury at Top 10 **SPORTS, PAGE D1**



Taking the time to talk

Professionals see a need to open up to teens about suicide **HEALTH, PAGE C1**

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CASEY PAGE PHOTOS, BILLINGS GAZETTE

Isaak Jones of Billings Carpet Cleaning vacuums up water around the files in the Yellowstone County Clerk and Recorder's office Monday.

County recorder's office 'dodges a bullet'

Sink overflowed over the weekend, causing flooding

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Jeff Martin and everyone else with title to a home in Yellowstone County "dodged a bullet" during the weekend when a fifth-floor sink with a slight drip stopped up, spilled over and did minor flood damage to the Yellowstone County Clerk and Recorder's office below.

Martin said a preliminary check Monday morning indicated no damage to title and other records stored in his

fourth-floor office. Some records date back to the 1880s, even before Yellowstone County became a county.

"It didn't get into any files that we see," said County Commissioner Chair John Ostlund.

Like others who share office space on the fourth floor of the Courthouse, Martin and his staff are readying for next month's move to the nearby Stillwater Building. The fourth floor is being remodeled for courtroom space.

Some standing water was visible in the Clerk and Recorder's office. No other Courthouse offices received any damage, although water was also detected in third-floor ceiling tiles.



Water pools on the floor around the files in the Yellowstone County Clerk and Recorder's office Monday.

Police chief defends department

St. John: Punishments were based on best practices

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Saying he was addressing "the elephant in the room," Police Chief Rich St. John told the Billings City Council Monday that the "misdeeds of a few officers should not be a broad-brushed opinion of how the Police Department operates."

St. John was referring to the controversy after the revelation that three officers were punished for having

sex with a woman on city property, some while on duty, as well as another case in which an officer having an affair with a Yellowstone County sheriff's deputy lost his job after a number of policy violations.

"Those officers committed egregious policy violations. I don't condone it, and it won't be tolerated," St. John said during the council's first budget hearing. The one-week and two-week suspensions St. John meted out "were based on overlapping

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Search still on for man who disappeared in river

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Authorities in Roosevelt County continue to search for a man believed to have drowned after he jumped into the Missouri River near Wolf Point last month in an attempt to save two people struggling in the frigid water.

Jason Azure, of Wolf Point, was last seen April 27, when he had been with a group of family and friends before trying to swim out to the two people, according to the Roosevelt County Sheriff's Office.

"The other people made it back to shore, but sadly, Jason did not," the sheriff's office wrote in a Facebook post Sunday night. "The Missouri River was running high and fast, and Jason was unable to fight the powerful current. He quickly went under and disappeared."

The water temperature at the time was 42 degrees, according to the post.

Roosevelt County Search and Rescue, the Fort Peck Tribes and several other agencies are assisting in what the sheriff's office is calling a "recovery effort."

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MontanaFair concert ticket sales climbing

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Ticket sales for MontanaFair's three headliners are 253 percent higher than last year's figure at this time, MetraPark's marketing and sales director told Yellowstone County commissioners on Monday.

MetraPark's announcement that Kelly Clarkson will perform Aug. 11 boosted ticket sales, Ray Massie said.

"That's the power of having superstars perform for you," Massie said.

Poison frontman Bret Michaels will perform during MontanaFair on Sunday, Aug. 12. Country music star Dustin Lynch will also play this year's fair.

Massie also highlighted items upcoming on MetraPark's schedule.

General Manager Bill Dutcher noted the Breakfast Exchange Club plans a May 18 event during which the organization will announce how much it's returned to the community through 40 years of beer sales.

"It's in the millions," Dutcher told commissioners.

This weekend begins "the first of many horse shows," he said, and Billings' three public high schools will hold their graduation ceremonies May 27 in the Rimrock Auto Arena.

The Yellowstone Valley Kennel



CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION, AP

Kelly Clarkson performs at the Billboard Women in Music event at the Ray Dolby Ballroom on Thursday, Nov. 30, 2017, in Los Angeles.

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